

Chairman Powell's remarks that broadband internet data services are "information services", and in fact provide "content" to their subscribers reveals a very limited knowledge of these services, and caters to the interests of the few large broadband providers and ILECs who currently do (or would like to) provide content to their broadband subscribers. In reality, broadband data transport and connectivity to the internet are very different matters than providing content. Some companies, such as AOL/Time Warner, MSN, SBC, and others may wish to provide "bundled" broadband transport and content as part of their business plans... and that's fine. The marketplace will determine the validity of these plans (although the marketplace seems to be uniquely DISINTERESTED in such broadband and content "bundling", as evidenced by the weak sales to date of AOL/Time Warner's "AOL Broadband" product). But for the Commission not to acknowledge the role of CLECs, independent ISPs (Internet Service Providers) and others in providing high-performance broadband services, "unbundled" from content, is a serious mistake. Often these CLECs and ISPs are the ONLY means of obtaining broadband services in those areas which the ILECs and large "bundled" operators deem insufficiently profitable to offer service. An even more grievous mistake would be for the FCC to embark on a path which creates an environment wherein the only means for a consumer to obtain broadband internet connectivity is by forcing them to buy service... with unwanted content and mediocre performance... from a remaining handful of ILECs and other "bundled" service providers, once CLECs and independent ISPs are legislated out of existence.

I currently use ADSL service, with transport provided by SBC and internet connectivity provided separately by an independent ISP, Texas.Net. I contracted these companies independently, and pay each of them separately each month. I am quite pleased that they DO NOT provide content... I don't want it, and I don't want to pay for it. The ISP services provided to me by TexasNet are well suited to my needs, and in fact the ISP service offered by SBC (SBIS/Prodigy), would not allow me to use my broadband connection in the productive manner which I do today. If someone else would be well-served by a "bundled" service, then I believe that they should by all means have the opportunity to do business with them. But an assumption that all broadband providers do (or should) provide content is as flawed as one that all grocery stores should also have gasoline pumps. Some do, and that's fine. But many more do not, and many of us want the continued freedom to buy our eggs in one place, and our unleaded in another.

Sincerely,

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